

Message Text

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM TOON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR, IS, US, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANON

REF: STATE 097591

1. IN OUR MEETING THIS MORNING IN COMPARED NOTES WITH RABIN ON LEBANON. AFTER WE HAD GONE OVER POINTS SET FORTH REFTEL IN WHICH PRIME MINISTER WAS KEENLY INTERESTED--I ASKED HIM WHAT HIS VIEWS WERE. HE SAID THAT HE TOUGHT THE NEXT TEN DAYS WOULD BE CRUCIAL ONES, AT LEAST AS FAR AS POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS WERE CONCERNED. DURING THAT PERIOD IT WILL PROBABLY BECOME CLEAR WHETHER THERE IS GOING TO BE A TRANSITION OF THE PRESIDENCY. THE CHRISTIANS, ACCORDING TO RABIN, HAVE BECOME QUITE SUSPICIOUS OVER WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN COOKED UP IN DAMASCUS BETWEEN ASAD AND ARAFAT. ANOTHER EASON THE NEXT TEN DAYS WERE CRITICAL, THE PRIME MINISTER ADDED, WAS THAT THEY WOULD REVEAL THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ULTIMATUM BROADCAST BY THE RADIO STATION KNOWN TO BE CLOSE TO JUMBLATT THAT THE LEFT WOULD FORM A REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT IF FRAGIE DID NOT STEP DOWN. RABIN ADMITTED IT WAS EVIDENT THAT IF FRAGIE DID NOT MOVE THE SITUATION WOULD BECOME VERY GRAVE.

2. I ASKED RABIN WHETHER THE ISRAELIS HAD ANY MEANS OF INFLUENCING FRANGIE IN HIS DECISION. RABIN RESPONDED THAT ISRAEL'S POLICY HAD BEEN "NOT TO TELL THEM WHAT TO DO." HE WENT ON TO

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SAY THAT THE POLICY HAD ALSO BEEN TO GIVE ASSISTANCE AS THEY COULD

BUT NOT TO TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF TRYING TO PERSUADE THE LEBANESE IN POLITICAL MATTERS. BUT WHAT HAPPENDS AFTER FRANGIE? HE AGREED WITH YOUR VIEW THAT THE DIFFICULT QUESTION WILL BE HOW TO STRUCTURE A GOVERNMENT IN WHICH THE CHRISTIANS AND THE MOSLEMS CAN LIVE AND WORK PEACEFULLY TOGETHER. AS AN AFTER-THOUGHT, HE SUGGESTED THAT IF THE CHRISTIANS HAD BEEN REALLY CLEVER THEY WOULD HAVE DONE WHAT THEY COULD TO GET AND MAINTAIN A SOLID ICEASEQEFIRE SO THAT THEY COULD RE-GROUP AND REORGANIZE.

3. COMMENT: DURING THIS EXCHANGE, AS WITH OTHERS WE HAVE HAD HERE CONCERNING LEBANON, THERE WAS NO HINT THAT THE ISRAELI POSITION WAS ABOUT TO CHANGE IN THE DIRECTION OF ANY FORM OF INTERVENTION. RABIN SAID NOTHING ABOUT SYRIAN ROLE IN LEBANON, BUT THIS PROBABLY WITHOUT SIGNIFICANCE SINCE HE SPOKE AT LENGTH ON THIS IN YESTERDAY'S MEETING WITH JAVITS, REPORTED SEPARATELY.
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